

News Release



For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER OPENS

State Parks to Serve Public Better with New Dispatch Center

State Fish and Game Wardens Also in New Center

(Prairie City) – On Wednesday, April 11, 2001, at 10 AM, the State Department of Parks and Recreation will open the new Northern Communications Center (NORCOM), at the Prairie City State Vehicle Recreation Area. This center will serve as the main emergency dispatch center for all State Park Peace Officers who patrol state park properties between the Grapevine and the Oregon Border, and from the coast north of San Francisco to the Nevada Border. It will serve several hundred state parks peace officers in more than 135 of the state's 266 state parks.

“ This is a very important addition to our state parks system, “ said Rusty Areias, Director of the State Department of Parks and Recreation. “Our officers often patrol very remote areas,” said Areias, “and we must have the ability to move emergency services to those places quickly. We must do all possible to keep our visitors safe from harm.”

In the State Department of Parks and Recreation 1983 Report to the Legislature on Radio Dispatching, the Department cited the lack of a year-round, 24-hour per day radio dispatch service as being a public safety concern. In the past, there were instances where

California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>

park peace officers were in areas where they had no radio dispatch center available for assistance calls. The report therefore, strongly recommended dispatch centers be built to provide statewide coverage. The first center was built in Monterey. The Prairie City facility is the second center. A third center is now under construction at Lake Perris State Recreation Area.

Statewide, California State Parks had more than 70 million visitors in the year 2,000. With the reduction in state parks fees this year, it is estimated that figure could go to nearly 100 million visitors in the year 2001. Bob Foster, the Superintendent for Public Safety for the Department of Parks and Recreation, said, "That volume of visitors requires that we do all possible to ensure that our officers respond to public safety requests as quickly as possible. Everyone visiting our parks deserves to have the peace of mind that when they need us, we'll be there in a timely manner."

The three centers will serve more than 600 state park peace officers in the 266 state park facilities throughout California. In addition, the State Department of Parks and Recreation is finalizing a contract with the State Department of Fish and Game to provide the dispatch service for more than 180 Fish and Game Wardens in the NORCOM area.

The NORCOM facility was built and equipped for approximately \$2.5 million. The building cost \$804,400 and the state-of-the-art communications and operations equipment cost \$1.7 million. The building is 3,200 square feet with 12 public safety dispatch console positions and 4 telephone-answering positions.

Directions:

NORCOM Center

**Prairie City State Vehicle Recreation Area,
13300 White Rock Road, Rancho Cordova.**

Travel east on Highway 50 from Sacramento, take the Prairie City Road exit and turn right. Follow Prairie City Road to White Rock Road and turn right. Follow White Rock Road for 1 mile. Turn left into the Prairie City SVRA and follow the park road for 1 mile. Once you pass the entrance station, NORCOM will be to your left. Look for the big radio tower. (916) 358-1300.